http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/ 1807 13th Street, Suite 202 Sacramento, CA 95811 Voice: (916) 322-2493 Fax: (916) 324-0475 State of California
Department of Fish and Game
Biogeographic Data Branch
bdb@dfg.ca.gov

CNDDB Key Facts

In many cases, the staff that are tasked with providing maps and analysis of the CNDDB haven't been trained on its usage. The CNDDB is a complex dataset and there are a number of essential facts to understand before working with and creating output from it.

The Key Facts about the CNDDB are:

- It is part of an international network of natural heritage programs, managed under the umbrella non-profit conservation organization, <u>NatureServe</u> (and formerly by the science staff at The Nature Conservancy). The data and mapping standards come from NatureServe, although many of these were initially influenced by the Department's early adoption of GIS.
- 2. It is a **positive detection** database. Records in the database exist only where species were detected. This means there is a bias in the database towards locations that have had more development pressures, and thus more survey work. Places that are empty or have limited information in the database often signify that little survey work has been done there. You cannot imply that there is less diversity in these places due to lack of information. There are no organized inventory or survey efforts designed specifically to populate the database.
- 3. **The CNDDB is NOT a public dataset**, and should not be included on maps that will be made public in reports and other documents. The "**Data Use Guidelines**" document outlines appropriate ways to put the CNDDB data on maps, and provides details on the symbology. http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/mapsanddata.asp
- 4. DFG issues an updated dataset every month (first Tuesday of the month). Our staff works on this dataset full-time, so there are new additions and updates every month. If you use the GIS dataset (versus the web applications), be sure to get an updated copy at the beginning of every month. http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/rf_ftpinfo.asp
- 5. Significant biological information about each Element Occurrence (ecological, threats, & history comments) is NOT included in the spatial GIS layers. The user should either query RareFind for the details of each Element Occurrence of interest, or join the Occurrence table (occ.dbf) to the shapefile by key field EONDX. See the "Data Use Guidelines" document on this page: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/mapsanddata.asp
- 6. It is best to always use the official layer symbology that is included in the monthly GIS download package. The different symbols convey differences in the accuracy of the data that was used to map the occurrences. For instance, there are multiple sizes of circles that can be used. The bigger the circle, the less accurate the source location information is. This is very different from a polygon in a species range map, for instance. The official symbology has these as un-filled circles. If you fill them with color, there's much more likelihood of misinterpretation of these to indicate more of the species, or to imply a larger likely habitat area.
- 7. CNDDB Element Occurrences are all represented by polygons. However, a point GIS dataset is also distributed along with the polygon GIS dataset. The only appropriate use for the point GIS dataset is to show basic distribution on a statewide, or near statewide, map. Zoomed in much closer than that, the points grossly misrepresent the true Element Occurrence distribution and/or spatial error of the data. Analysis done using the point layer will almost always result in erroneous results, for instance tallying what species occurs in a specific geographic area.

- 8. Acreage summaries should never be done using the CNDDB dataset. Nor should the Element Occurrence polygons ever be used to indicate an amount of area covered by a species within a project area. The polygon sizes generally represent differing degrees of inaccuracy in the data, not how much of an area a species covers.
- 9. There is a **Commercial version of the database** as well as a Government version. The Commercial version has approximately 2% of all occurrences generalized to Quad polygon features for data sensitivity or contributor requirements. This is important to know if you're working with a Commercial subscriber (eg. a private consultant). Your dataset view may be different than theirs if you are a Government user.
- 10. **CNDDB and BIOS are different things.** BIOS is a web mapping application housing hundreds of biological datasets. CNDDB is one of these datasets. A full comparison can be see here: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/compare_cnddb_bios.asp

If you have any questions on the use of this dataset, contact the CNDDB Coordinator: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/